

London protest exposes Ukraine's crimes against political prisoners

written by Theo Russell
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Photo: Theo Russell

A protest was held in London Jan. 28 opposite the residence of the prime minister to bring the crimes of the Ukrainian government to the attention of the British people.

A spokesperson for International Ukraine Anti-Fascist Solidarity said: "We want the people of Britain to know that the regime in Ukraine, to which the British government has given billions of pounds in financial and military support, has been committing horrific crimes against its own people, including Russian speakers,

opposition activists and campaigners, journalists and Roma people, under the cover of accusing them of treason.

“Several mayors and local elected civilian officials in eastern Ukraine have been summarily executed for ‘crimes’ such as negotiating humanitarian corridors with the Russian military. They should have been entitled to a due process of law, instead of being tortured, shot, and then dumped in the street.

“Hundreds of journalists, bloggers, politicians, elected representatives, activists, priests, sportspeople, and even Ukrainian negotiators and military officers have been arrested and beaten, and some tortured or murdered. Most were charged with treason simply for opposing Kiev’s policies and not brought to trial after many months.

“[Alexander Matyushenko](#), one of dozens of leftists arrested in Dnipro, central Ukraine, was an activist with the Livizta (Left) organization, which campaigned against social spending cuts and right-wing propaganda. He was arrested by Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) and Azov Brigade members, tortured, and forced to shout the nationalist salute, ‘Slava Ukraini,’ while his wife’s hair was cut off with a knife.

“One of Ukraine’s most prominent human-rights activists, Elena Berezhnaya, director of the Institute of Legal Policy and Social Protection, who has spoken before the U.N. Security Council, was arrested in March 2022 in Kiev. There has been no news of her since.

“We know about these crimes because Ukrainian ultra-rightists and even regular soldiers have bragged in social media posts, including posting a Russian soldier who had one of his eyes gouged before he was killed, with the caption ‘One-eyed captured Russian pig.’

“We think it is essential to speak out about the actions of a regime for whom the British government seems to have unlimited resources to support, at a time when millions here in Britain are facing a grim and uncertain future and our basic public services are chronically underfunded and understaffed.”

During the protest, a Lithuanian supporter was attacked by a Georgian rightist, but he was dragged away by police and an Iranian from another nearby protest. Later, a small group of Ukrainian and English supporters of the Nazi-infested regime in Kiev launched an aggressive verbal assault. They were confronted by the protestors before the police intervened to warn them about their behavior.

Members of the parties joined the protest including the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist Leninist), Socialist Fight, the Socialist Labour Party, Consistent Democrats, the New Communist Party, the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist Leninist), the Labour Party and the Posadists in Britain.

Solidarity messages were received from Chris Williamson, former Labour Party MP and now a leading member of the Socialist Labour Party, Phil Wilayto of the Odessa Solidarity Campaign in Richmond, USA, and Leonid Ilderkin from the Union of Political Refugees and Political Prisoners of Ukraine, who recently moved back to Ukraine.

